Solidar
International Workers Aid
Entraide Ouvrière Internationale
Internationales Arbeiterhilfswerk
Since 1948
SOLIDAR is a European network of 47 NGOs and labour movement organisations working towards all people living in dignity. SOLIDAR promotes equality, solidarity and social justice in the areas of social affairs, international cooperation and education.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFL-CIO</strong></td>
<td>American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
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<td><strong>CLONG</strong></td>
<td>European Commission Development NGOs Liaison Committee</td>
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<td><strong>CONCORD</strong></td>
<td>European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development</td>
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<td><strong>ECHO</strong></td>
<td>European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office</td>
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<td><strong>ECOSOC</strong></td>
<td>Economic and Social Council of the United Nations</td>
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<td><strong>ETUC</strong></td>
<td>European Trade Union Conference</td>
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<td><strong>EESC</strong></td>
<td>European Economic and Social Committee</td>
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<td><strong>EUCIS-LLL</strong></td>
<td>European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td><strong>EURODAD</strong></td>
<td>European Network on Debt and Development</td>
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<td><strong>ICFTU</strong></td>
<td>International Confederation of Free Trade Unions</td>
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<td><strong>ILO</strong></td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td><strong>INGO</strong></td>
<td>International Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td><strong>ITUC</strong></td>
<td>International Trade Union Confederation (merger of ICFTU and WCL)</td>
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<td><strong>TUAC</strong></td>
<td>Trade Union Advisory Committee</td>
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<td><strong>UNESCO</strong></td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td><strong>UNHCR</strong></td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td><strong>WCL</strong></td>
<td>World Confederation of Labour</td>
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<td><strong>WTO</strong></td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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FOREWORD

Josef Weidenholzer, President of SOLIDAR

Over the course of the last years SOLIDAR has been growing very quickly, new challenges have had to be met and the expectations of the various stakeholders involved have been almost insatiable. The speed is fast and there has been no time for rest.

From the moment when we moved the centre of activities to Brussels in 1995, our record is full of remarkable achievements and we became one of the major forces of civil society on European level.

In joint collaboration with our allies in the community of social NGOs and our friends in the socialist family and the progressive movement, we have been able to significantly influence the agenda of European politics, including:

The fight for a Charter of Fundamental Rights, the fight against the complete liberalisation of services and for more public influence in the field of services of general interest, the fight against poverty and for human rights at all levels.

In the framework of an alliance with the International and European trade unions, the Global Progressive Forum and World Solidarity Movement, we were able to launch a worldwide campaign on ‘Decent Work and Decent Life’ which has developed its strength as a campaign working on issues affecting both the North and South, such as working poor. We have also been able to leave a mark in the debate on the framework of international trade emphasising the necessity of Core Labour Standards and social protection.

SOLIDAR’s uniqueness is its global approach: the fight against poverty and for human rights. It cannot be confined to a respective nation state or “Fortress Europe”. Securing a high degree of social protection and high quality of social service provision is one of our core aims. We would not be satisfied if these achievements would only apply to the developed world. Without the goal of changing the conduct of international cooperation, the endeavours for a better quality of social welfare in Europe would be incomplete.

We stand in the tradition of “education populaire” and the workers’ educational movement and our campaigns are efforts of applied enlightenment. SOLIDAR is deeply committed to the vision of Social Europe and convinced that this cannot be brought about without involving people throughout Europe.

We could make vital steps towards the direction of transforming the European Union into a Social Union. We are aware that the arrival point of our rally is far away and our struggle will require additional exertion. The past six decades has proven our capability to change things and to adjust to new challenges. Our history makes us confident that we will meet the requisites of the future contest that we have to determine.

Anniversaries are furthermore rare chances of expressing thanks and gratitude to those people who have led the organisation through the meanders of history. We deeply appreciate their contribution. We also know that progress can only be achieved if one can rely on cooperation and sympathy. With deep indebtedness, we convey our gratitude to our supporters, companions and comrades. We hope that they will continue in their support.

For 60 years SOLIDAR and IWA have been standing at the forefront of social improvements; uniting people for solidarity, equality and social justice. The history of our movement is not at an end, but merely at the beginning: Together we are a force for change!
George A. Papandreou, President of Socialist International

The future of social democracy has yet to be written but we can already look back on a successful past.

A past that has seen the re-establishment of social democracy and the labour movement from the ashes of the Second World War, with the Socialist International today being stronger than ever before.

A past that had Socialist International recognise the need for joint humanitarian action and therefore in 1948 set up “Entraide Socialiste” which under the name of SOLIDAR celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

And a past that had both Socialist International and SOLIDAR evolve into worldwide promoters of democratic change and social progress.

The world has evolved too in the last 60 years. While Europe reached stability with the fall of the dictatorships in Spain, Portugal and Greece in the mid-1970s, other parts of the world still struggle for democracy. A new global economy puts profit over people and in many countries the welfare state is deteriorating. Economic change has also brought about a new category of refugees, while climate change and diminishing natural resources may lead to new areas of conflict. In view of these challenging conditions, some argue that social democracy is outdated and that its concepts and strategies not fit for the 21st century.

I, however, do not fear for the future of social democracy. We have found new ways of including hitherto marginalised groups into our organisations and into our work.

In recent years, we have launched a series of far-reaching reforms – such as the creation of decentralised networks, deliberative forums, mechanisms to improve transparency and in support of volunteerism, life-long education and direct participation in policy-making – to open our organisation to all citizens as SOLIDAR has done.

I do not fear for the future of social democracy. Our common values of freedom, justice and solidarity and our quest for liberation, equality and inclusion are eternal.

Our common values are our beacon and our guiding light. They influence our goals and our very deeds. They are the ethos of our policies and the means for our activities. They are the basis of our unity and they light our route.

The theme of this year’s congress of the Socialist International was “the courage to make a difference”. And I am glad that SOLIDAR, over the last 60 years, has shown the courage to make a difference and I am positive that it will continue to do so in the future.
HISTORY OF A MOVEMENT

In 2008 SOLIDAR celebrates its 60th anniversary. But the origins of this international union of welfare organisations can be traced back much further than just 60 years.

In July 1928 delegates from all over the world gathered in Paris to attend an International Conference on public and private welfare. While on the one hand this conference led to the founding of ICSW, the International Council of Social Welfare, which still exists today, it also became obvious that the delegates from the socialist welfare organisations had a differing view on how to organise their work both on a national and a global level.

The idea of a closer collaboration between socialist organisations was born, and in 1930 German Labour Welfare (AWO) celebrated its 10th anniversary by inviting socialist welfare organisations from other countries to Berlin to create the first International Labour Welfare organisation. Delegates from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and German-speaking Czechs elected Marie Juchacz as President and a news bulletin and children’s holiday encounter were planned as its joint international activities.

A meeting during the conference of Socialist and Labour International in Vienna in 1931 proved to be more successful with regards to participation and the planning of activities. But unfortunately no actions could be carried out as fascism rose to power shortly afterwards, and European social democracy was disbanded, prohibited and forced into exile. The Socialist and Labour International ceased to operate.

*36 countries and a total of 753 delegates were present. In the International Labour Welfare Conference on July 24th participated delegates from Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Switzerland.
Solidarity, not charity

After the end of World War II (and the downfall of the Nazi Regime) social democracy soon re-emerged in Europe. Many organisations were re-established, like the Socialist International. The Socialist International Liaison Office (SILO) was set-up and in 1946 developed into the International Committee of social democratic and labour organisations, COMISCO.

And it is with COMISCO in 1948 that the history of the organisation now known as SOLIDAR started, with the establishment of a work group called ‘Entr’aide Socialiste Internationale’ under COMISCO’s roof. Five socialist parties – namely from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Switzerland - were interested in participating actively. Entr’aide Socialiste Internationale’s goal was strictly humanitarian; it contributed to easing the hardships endured by workers and, with this help, to strengthening the belief in international solidarity. Work at that time was mostly centred on caring for refugees and displaced persons. Coordinating ‘colis’ (aid shipments) was one of the major tasks of Entr’aide Socialiste Internationale. A first relief action was carried out and a ‘Centre d’accueil’ (reception shelter) for Spanish children in France was set-up.

However, the Belgian Socialist Party was out for more. Jan Luyten and Adrian Geets wanted to establish Entr’aide Socialiste Internationale as an independent organisation. After a first attempt in Strasbourg in 1950, which proved to be unsuccessful due to a lack of participants, they succeeded in founding Entr’aide Socialiste Internationale (ESI) in February 1951 and gaining approval from COMISCO in March 1951.


3 Jan Luyten, 1912-1975; Secretary of the Socialist Mutual Insurance Federation of Gent (Fédération des Mutualités socialistes de Gand); prisoner of war until 1941, afterwards part of the resistance; 1945-1975 national Secretary of the Belgian Socialist Party (BSP); 1945-1975 President of Entr’aide Socialist; 1948-1962 President of International Workers’ Aid.
Belgian Socialist Aid - Entraide Socialiste Belge

In 1936 during the era of Fascism and the Spanish Civil War, the Belgian Labour Party created ‘Entraide Socialiste’ to organise the influx of Spanish Republican refugee families in Belgium. Hundreds of workers’ families had spontaneously welcomed a great number of Spanish children who fled from the massacres of the Fascists. Entraide Socialiste also organised many activities in solidarity with the victims of Mussolini in Italy and the Nazi regime.

After the end of German occupation, these activities acquired a more structured character and Entraide Socialiste was formally set-up. In the beginning, this new organisation mainly focused on receiving political refugees, and from the sixties, also received students from developing countries. During the 1960s Entraide Socialiste adopted another two activities: emergency relief and structural development cooperation. It also opened up progressively to the fundamental problem which constitutes North-South dialogue. When a majority of former colonies proclaimed independence during the 1960s, the Socialists decided to establish an NGO for development cooperation: the National Fund for Development Cooperation, which provided social and economic support to initiatives in the South. One of the central underlying motivations was the tradition of the struggle for emancipation of European workers and the propertyless.

On 1 May 1979 Entraide Socialiste was renamed Solidarité Socialiste. The political orientation of Solidarité Socialiste, which puts the defence of democracy and human rights among its priorities, has certainly influenced the countries of intervention of the NGO which include Chile, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Congo, former Portuguese colonies in Africa, and Palestine. Following the example of a series of other NGOs, the notion of ‘help’ has progressively been replaced by ‘partnership’, seeing the installation of relations on equal terms between the NGOs of the North and their interlocutors from the South.

In 1986 the NGO was split into two distinct and independent organisations: Solidarité Socialiste – Fonds de Cooperation au Développement (French-speaking) and Socialistische Solidariteit – Fonds voor OntwikkelingsSamenwerking (Dutch-speaking) and the currently existing non-profit organisations were created.

Today Solidarité Socialiste is a non-governmental organisation of cooperation for development. Active in Belgium in matters of education for development, awareness campaigning, and advocacy towards the Belgian French-speaking public, Solidarité Socialiste is above all a strategic partner for more than 50 local southern organisations spread over 15 countries in Africa, Latin America and the Near-East.

Socialistische Solidariteit – Fonds voor OntwikkelingsSamenwerking (FOS) is the North-South organisation of the socialist movement in Flanders. According to its creed that social struggle is a worldwide struggle, it cooperates with organisations of individuals who fight for their rights. Together with its socialist rank, it supports its partners in the South in their struggle for decent labour and right to health.

4 Cf. www.solsoc.be/article68.html
www.fos-soosol.be/cntnt/languages/ENG.php
Another assembly was held in July 1951 during the Frankfurt Congress, the founding congress of the Socialist International. Together with Swiss Labour Assistance (SAH), a Swiss NGO founded by the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland and the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, which did not participate in February, Entraide Socialiste Internationale now consisted of the welfare organisations from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Holland and Switzerland.

In December 1951, statutes were presented and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU, became a member. The organisation was officially named: Entraide Ouvrière Internationale - Internationales Arbeiterhilfswerk - International Labour Assistance (EOI/IAH/IWA).

Its seat was to be in Brussels, as the Entraide Socialiste Belge was responsible for the Secretariat work. Aid for political refugees remained the main field of action for International Workers’ Aid (IWA) and its member organisations during the first years of its existence. For this purpose IWA worked closely with the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration, ICEM, to help resettle people displaced by World War II. Acting according to their socialist beliefs, they debated the issue of ‘hard-core refugees’ and how to successfully re-integrate them into society. In caring for those and other refugees - especially from the refugee camps at Trieste - IWA members carried out several projects. Entraide Ouvrière Française (EOF) was, for example, resettling refugee farmer families in the region of Les Landes.

Other early activities included aid shipments and holiday encounters for children and youngsters. Realising the necessity to actively influence politics through cooperation with other international organisations, IWA established a liaison office in Geneva in 1953, after being recognised as a consultative party with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observer. IWA became a consultative party with UNESCO in 1955.

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5 Swiss Labour Assistance and the Parti Socialiste Suisse [Swiss Socialist Party] were waiting for COMISCO to officially approve ESI as an independent organisation before joining in with any activities.

6 Instead of using the initial name ‘International Labour Assistance, ILA’ I will henceforth use the name adopted at a later date ‘International Workers’ Aid, IWA’ to avoid confusion.

7 ‘Hard-Core refugee’ is by definition someone who is neither in good physical shape (e.g. ill, handicapped, very old, traumatised) nor in the condition to provide for him- or herself in or easily adapt to a receiving country.

8 German Labour Welfare (AWO) was primarily responsible for these encounters, later being joined by Austrian People’s Aid (ÖVH).

9 The liaison office was in operation until 1960.
IWA gladly welcomed the Centro Italiano di Solidarietà Sociale (CISS) from Italy and Hind Mazdoor Sabha, an Indian trade union, as new members in the mid-1950s. In an attempt to further broaden the organisation, negotiations with Scandinavian welfare organisations also began.

As the Scandinavian organisations had successfully built up an image of neutrality in their respective countries they were afraid of joining an organisation that was so closely related to Socialist International and ICFTU. To facilitate joining the organisation for the Scandinavians, IWA decided to amend its statutes in 1956 (the amendments can be found on page 13). Another vital part of this statutory debate was whether the focus of IWA’s work should be social-humanitarian or cultural-pedagogical.

Despite putting much effort into gaining new contacts, for example with ‘Foyer de la Femme’ from Luxembourg, membership did not increase. Nevertheless IWA proved to be successful in its work. When in 1956 the Hungarian revolution was suppressed by Soviet forces, member organisations - first of all Austrian Volkshilfe - played a vital part in caring for the more than 170,000 refugees who had fled from Hungary. In 1957 an ‘Aid for Hungary’ booklet was published by IWA. In July 1958, International Workers’ Aid called for action on behalf of the Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. These actions did not go unnoticed; the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) strongly recognised IWA’s work in its Executive Committee meeting in 1957 and in the UNHCR yearbook published on the occasion of the UN World Refugee Year in 1960.

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10 Quote from a leaflet presenting International Labour Assistance or IWA, produced in 1954.
Learning from these experiences, IWA decided to establish an emergency fund from surpluses. A first evaluation in 1964 proved that being able to give first aid through this fund was tremendously effective.

The new statutes were finally approved in 1958 and ASF-Dansk Folkehjelp, Norwegian People’s Aid and Swedish Samaritans joined IWA.

Apart from the changes concerning IWA’s relationship with the Socialist International, the statutes now allowed more than one organisation per country to be a member of IWA and acknowledged the diversity of member organisations by stating IWA’s tasks as social, pedagogical, cultural and humanitarian. The changes to the statutes also allowed the setting up of sub-committees or Working Groups on specific topics of interest. The very first Working Group to be set up was the Refugee Council chaired by Austrian People’s Aid - Volkshilfe (ÖVH).
Norwegian People’s Aid - Norske Folkehjelp

Norwegian People’s Aid, NPA, was founded in December 1939. Its primary tasks at that time consisted of helping the Spanish and the Finnish, both peoples being affected by war. During the German occupation of Norway in the 1940s, Norwegian People’s Aid sought exile in Sweden as the organisation had been prohibited by the occupants.

After the war had ended, NPA engaged in help for victims of Nazism by caring for refugees and starting drives whilst the Norwegian Solidarity Committee for a free and democratic Spain continued its work. During the 1950s NPA not only offered mother and child care centres it also established the first nursing home for epileptics. NPA also started campaigning for universal access to healthcare, and with a ‘First Aid/Search and Rescue Service’ already active since 1932, NPA played a vital role both in lobbying for social and medical service for workers and in the ‘Help Europe’ campaign to rebuild and reconcile Europe.

‘Help to Hungary’ in 1956 and help to earthquake victims in Yugoslavia in 1963 were some of its early international interventions. In the 1970s NPA expanded its international activities beyond Europe, with fieldwork in Vietnam after the war and supporting the African National Congress (ANC) in its struggle against the Apartheid regime in South Africa. The setting up of a Junta in Chile also called for humanitarian support and solidarity actions.

The 1980s not only saw NPA’s engagement in South Africa and Latin America but also in the Middle East and in Sudan. NPA’s development programmes aim at obtaining an equal share of power and equal distribution of wealth in a democratic society. At home, NPA’s first centre for Asylum seekers was opened and youth work became a priority.

NPA’s involvement in the campaign for the ban of anti-personnel mines resulted in both the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and the Nobel Prize. Work on national level during the 1990s included diminishing the generational gap and strengthening the social security net, working in the belief that both young and old should live in a sound and healthy environment.

Today First Aid, Mountain Rescue Service and emergency aid are important components of NPA’s work. Other focus areas are the running of reception centres for refugees, voluntary activities for the elderly and disabled, as well as work against racism. On an international level, Norwegian People’s Aid has commitments in more than 36 countries. It is one of the leading organisations in humanitarian mine action and has been actively promoting an international ban on cluster bombs.

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12 www.folkehjelp.no
13 The Norwegian Solidarity Committee for a free and democratic Spain was dissolved in 1979. Until then it was based in NPA.
Having been in charge of the organisation for more than a decade, Jan Luyten resigned as President, and Entraide Socialiste Belge suspended its membership in the early 1960s. Giacomo Bernasconi from Swiss Labour Assistance (SAH) took over as President.

SAH brought new life to IWA. They introduced new fields of action, such as development aid, and initiated a debate on the role of IWA. The starting point of the discussion was the question of whether IWA should propose and carry out projects and activities of its own or whether just coordinating the actions of its members was enough.

An internal discussion paper “Future of IWA” defined the role of International Workers’ Aid as follows: “To secure its work it is necessary to find the means to finance a suitable secretariat and acknowledge the need to establish common guidelines.

IWA is to promote and encourage international solidarity; it coordinates the activities of its member organisations. It drafts expert reports and comments on social regulations within the framework of the European Communities and other European organisations. IWA encourages, plans and carries out holiday camps. It provides development aid in the fields of welfare organisations and social policy.”

14 Entraide Socialiste rejoined IWA in 1975.
15 Giacomo Bernasconi, 1905-1972; Swiss trade union Secretary, responsible for social policy; IWA Vice President 1954-1962; IWA President 1962-1970.
16 “The fact that we have never been able to win all our affiliated members to participate in one joint activity is due to their different structures and main fields of action, but also due to their differing opinions on the activities proposed.” Giacomo Bernasconi, minutes of the Executive Committee, 11/6/1961, Paris.
17 Giacomo Bernasconi authored this discussion paper. Having been thoroughly discussed, the reform did not take place due to the aforementioned differing opinions between member organisations held and lack of finances.
Swiss Labour Assistance (SAH) was founded by the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland and the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions in 1936. Its first goal was to support workers’ families in need both nationally and internationally. After the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the following Second World War, Swiss Labour Assistance became active on behalf of refugees. Within the ‘Colis de Suisse’ [aid packets from Switzerland] activities, SAH sent aid shipments to refugee camps throughout Europe. Through these shipments it was possible to provide for tens of thousands of war refugees.

SAH also played a leading role in founding ‘Schweizer Spende für die Kriegsgeschädigten’ [Swiss spending for victims of the war] in 1944 together with the Swiss government within the reconstruction of Europe. Building on the international contacts SAH had made during the war, they decided to actively engage in development aid in numerous countries. In 1956 SAH was one of Austrian Volkshilfe’s strongest partners in aiding Hungarian refugees. SAH started vocational education projects in Greece, Palestine, Israel, Yugoslavia, Senegal, Benin and Kenya.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, civil war in Biafra and the oppression of the opposition by the Greek military regime, resulted in thousands of politically persecuted peoples fleeing and SAH both caring for them and taking a stand for them. Equally formative elements of SAH’s work during the 1960s were natural disasters. SAH developed a disaster management department that still exists today under the name of humanitarian aid.

After the uprising in Nicaragua, European organisations provoked a wave of solidarity for Central America in the 1970s. SAH sent volunteers to Nicaragua and carried out a literacy campaign. After Pinochet had taken power in Chile and Turkey had seen a military coup d’état, the number of people seeking asylum in Switzerland increased significantly, refugee help thus became a main priority for SAH. As early as 1984 a first revision of the Asylum laws took place, and many more refugees followed. To be able to focus on specific needs and problems, SAH therefore reduced the number of countries it was active in.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, rapid change took place in Eastern Europe. In close collaboration with the trade unions in the respective countries, SAH started labour market actions and an education programme for trade unions in Romania.

At the beginning of the 1990s SAH evolved rapidly. Both unemployment, which rose from 1 to 5 percent, and new poverty was affecting the state, cantons and towns. SAH acted as a pioneer in developing programmes for the unemployed. Then during the Balkan wars which caused death and devastation, SAH gave humanitarian aid and helped in reconstruction in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo.

In 2005 SAH was decentralised; its regional offices became autonomous and independent organisations. The former main seat in Zurich took over the international projects and the communications and fundraising department.

SAH is committed to achieving a socially, politically and economically just society. It empowers people to live their lives with dignity and security. It assists people in exercising their rights. To achieve these goals SAH seeks to influence the social and political processes that are relevant to its work.


Alongside these intra-organisational debates, IWA carried out its work. Activities of IWA members on an international level consisted of a vocational training project for workers in and from Greece, the setting up of a vocational education and training school in Algeria and aiding people affected by natural disasters. Further projects and activities were carried out in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, in India, Persia, Brazil and throughout Europe.

In the late 1960s Abeitersamariterbund Germany (ASB) and Arbeiteramiterbund Austria (ASBO) joined IWA, thus strengthening the organisation’s ability to engage in first aid and disaster relief.

The decade ended with a totalitarian system suppressing another peaceful rebellion and IWA caring for those who fled Czechoslovakia after Prague Spring; the Greek military setting up a Junta which led to the ‘Aid for Greece’ action (in close collaboration with the Austrian Trade Union Federation); and relief work after an earthquake in Italy.
When AWo was re-established in 1946 it could already look back on almost 30 years of history. After the First World War had ended, the Board of the German Social Democratic Party had in 1919 assigned Marie Juchacz the task of forming a social democratic welfare organisation, and in such a way, binding women who cared for social matters closely to the party.

Marie Juchacz was to become the first Chairperson of the newly founded AWo steering Committee. Its goals were to provide to those affected by poverty, the tools necessary to help themselves, to lobby for the social model of the Weimar Republic and to be actively involved in achieving social reforms. The organisation grew quickly and all over Germany local committees were established. AWo was particularly active in the field of advanced training. It started a lottery to raise money for vocational training scholarships, established schools for men and women working in welfare and published a textbook on welfare care.

However after the National Socialist Party came to power, AWo was among the organisations that were prohibited. By establishing a front organisation, the ‘German Foreign Youth Foundation’, AWo managed to keep at least some of its assets.

In post-war Germany, AWo grew to its former strength. Starting out with simple forms of help, caring for the politically and ethnically persecuted and prisoners of war, they re-established their recreational programmes for children and youth. As early as 1949 a welfare school for social professions was set up. AWo was particularly active in the field of advanced training. It started a lottery to raise money for vocational training scholarships, established schools for men and women working in welfare and published a textbook on welfare care.

In 1970 the statutes were revised once more and the Secretariat moved from Zurich to Bonn. Lotte Lemke was to be elected first female President, and Richard Haar became new General Secretary. German Workers’ Welfare (AWO) held the Presidency of both IWA and SOLIDAR until 2003.
This counselling service was later broadened to workers from Yugoslavia, Tunisia and Morocco. In 1969 the Lotte Lemke School of Arts & Crafts was opened in Madras, India. In collaboration with a private Indian welfare organisation, this school was set up to provide girls, single women and widows with the basic skills needed for qualified work.

In 1956 AWO began cooperating with La Ligue de l’Enseignement, and in 1963 both organisations contributed to the foundation of the Franco-German Youth Office in which AWO actively encouraged its members to participate in exchange programmes. To allow a thorough analysis of legislation and detect possible tasks, expert committees on youth, family, social affairs, care for the elderly, health, foreigners and organisation & communications were set-up. In 1987 AWO adopted basic principles under the title of ‘humanitarian action out of political responsibility’.

In 1990 AWO – like Germany – was reunited. AWO broadened its activities in the fields of unemployment and jobs for youth. Securing the achievements of the welfare state, keeping the social security net tight and fighting poverty were among AWO’s main goals during the 1990s.

Today Arbeiterwohlfahrt fights for a socially just society by voluntary commitment and professional services. Against its historical background as part of the labour movement, it determines its actions through the values of free democratic socialism: solidarity, tolerance, freedom, equality and justice.
With the political and organisational changes taking place, IWA felt it was necessary to create a basic set of policy principles on which to act. Discussions started in 1974 and the final principles were then published in 1977 and centred IWA’s work on the goal of free government under the law and liberal/democratic socialism. IWA stated guidelines for its work in the fields of health policy, family policy, pedagogy, youth policy, assistance to the young and the elderly, the handicapped and delinquents, welfare aid and the work with and for foreign/migrant workers. It defined its international tasks as the following ones: development cooperation, aid for refugees, international youth encounters and disaster relief.

When in 1974 Kurt Partzsch was elected President, IWA was active in the fields of migrant workers and European social policy. Disaster relief and development actions took place in Angola, Nicaragua, and Vietnam.

After the fall of the Franco Regime in Spain in 1975, IWA worked together with Union General de Trabajadores (UGT), the Spanish trade union, to build up a new welfare organisation in Spain: Solidaridad Democrática. IWA had proven that it was in fact able to accomplish its frequently emphasised task of social development aid.

Solidaridad Democrática – Solidarité Démocratique Espagnole

Founded after the liberation of France from German occupation in 1944 by the exiled Spanish Socialist Party (PSE), the exiled trade union UGT and the Spanish Socialist Youth, Solidaridad Democrática cared for Spanish exiled workers and their families – about 60,000 – 100,000 persons. Solidaridad Democrática was an IWA observer during the early 1950s, but did not become a member. With the help of social democratic organisations, Solidaridad Democrática cared for the most basic needs of the refugees, such as food, shelter, clothes and health care, later establishing schools and nursing homes.

Spanish-based Solidaridad Democrática provided a wide range of social services and activities: day care centres, mother and child counselling, training of home helps, integration of migrant workers, occupational workshops for the young, welfare programmes for the aged, children, young people and disabled persons, reintegration of prisoners, community centres, children’s day care centres and guidance and research centres on women’s marginalisation. By the mid 1980s Solidaridad Democrática started to get involved in development aid too. Their development projects were centred on vocational training and providing job opportunities.
The 1970s ended with a debate on widening IWA to organisations which specialised in specific domains of welfare and assistance. The decision to do so brought about an increase in member organisations throughout the 1980s. Na’amat (Israel), Associacao de Servicio de Apoio Social (Portugal), the Evert Vermeer Foundation (The Netherlands), the International Solidarity Foundation (Finland) and Solidaridad Internacional (Spain) broadened the spectrum of members.

On the other hand IWA further strengthened its external links. After only having had consultative status for nearly 20 years, International Workers’ Aid gained recognition as an International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) with the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1973. In 1984 they gained recognition as an organisation with consultative status from the Council of Europe and in 1985 as an INGO with the European Communities. From 1986 on, IWA cooperated with the European Commission as an INGO in the field of emergency and development aid. As a logical consequence of this close relation to the European Communities, IWA chose to establish a liaison office in Brussels in 1987.28

As the Centro Italiano di Solidarietà Sociale (CISS) and Entraide Ouvrière Francaise were no longer able to fully participate on an international level, they were accepted as guest members. The joining of One World Action (UK) and the Office Centrale pour la Coopération Culturelle Internationale (OFFICO – coordination of French Secular Organisations for international cooperation) compensated the loss. To be able to better coordinate common activities, IWA agreed on guidelines for relief action and for development aid. The main activities on IWA level consisted of seminars on development aid led by individual member organisations and joint actions in Nicaragua, for the people of the Western Sahara and for Afghani refugees in Pakistan. The total volume of development projects reached a first peak in 1981 with a total of 32 million German Marks [roughly 15 million Euros].

In 1988 under the aegis of Hermann Buschfort29 IWA celebrated its 40th anniversary - its anniversary booklet strongly focused on North-South interdependence as IWA had at that time participated in the Europe-wide campaign and successfully made a joint contribution. By achieving this, the profile of IWA was raised, dialogue with important politicians and trade union representatives were initiated and basic documents for IWA were published.

28 The liaison office had to be closed in 1992 due to financial problems.
A new world order

From 1989 on, Europe saw major changes in its political landscape. Germany was reunited, the Soviet Union collapsed and with it the Cold War ended, borders that had been closed for decades were re-opened. Capitalism seemed to have won. Free trade was the mantra of a generation and in 1994 the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was established. The Associazione per la Participazione allo Sviluppo (Italy) was welcomed as new member of International Workers’ Aid.

As early as the 1990s, trade unions and NGOs renounced the obscenity of market-driven globalisation. In close collaboration with the ILO, the Council of the European Union, and the European Commission, International Workers’ Aid promoted its views and values concerning international trade and the impact it has on both the individual human being and the societies they live in. IWA attended WTO summits and in preparation organised round table discussions to gain wider reception, provide different views and allow a civil dialogue on the terms and conditions of international trade.

Nevertheless, IWA was still not satisfied with the extent of coordination achieved on the level of humanitarian aid, disaster relief and development programmes. Emphasis was “still placed on national interests and interest of individual agencies (…)”.

In 1992 guidelines for International Workers’ Aid development projects were published and the General Assembly in 1993 not only brought about a new President, Dr. Manfred Ragati, but also another revision of the basic principles, which had been a compass for IWA’s work since 1985. IWA now concentrated on four main fields of activity: social welfare at national and European levels; emergency, humanitarian, relief and disaster work; development cooperation and educational campaigning. To achieve its tasks IWA carried out joint and bi- or multilateral projects in Latin America and Africa through its member agencies, held seminars on the themes of educational campaigning, development cooperation and humanitarian aid and IWA representatives participated in international conferences & seminars.

Through its activities IWA cared for refugees, immigrants and the exiled, it carried out actions against poverty, famine and epidemics, and set up initiatives against drugs, crime and the destruction of the environment. To achieve sustained success, the publication of booklets and education material increased significantly.

In 1994 three IWA member organisations – ASB (Germany), ASBÖ (Austria) and ASF (Denmark) - joined forces and together with Sécuristes Français-Croix Blanche founded SAINT, Samaritans International.
SAINT - Samaritans International

As so many other organisations SAINT’s roots can be traced back to the period between the wars. In 1926 on the occasion of the Austrian Workers Gymnastic and Sports Meeting in Vienna, a first international conference of all Worker Samaritans was convened for July. The aim of the conference was to make the Worker Samaritans into an international federation and create guidelines for spreading the international Worker Samaritans’ principles. As a result of the conference the German ASB set-up an ‘International Workers’ Samaritans Information Office (intASib)’.

In November 1953 all ASB organisations in Europe met in Hamburg for an international conference. As a result the ASB federations from Germany, Denmark, France, Norway, Austria, Sweden and Switzerland decided to form the ‘Workers’ Samaritan International (ASI)’. In July 1954, the ASI was able to pass its practical test at a joint relief action at a flood disaster in Austria. In 1956 ASI members joined in the relief action after the national uprising in Hungary. In 1957 ASB organisations affiliated in the ASI met once again in order to decide on setting-up an ASI Secretarial office and to achieve recognition at the United Nations. International meetings and joint actions, in particular disaster assignments of the specialist Samaritan Organisations mark the work of the European ASB. In 1994 the European Samaritan Organisations merged to become “Samaritan International (SAINT)”.

Today SAINT is composed of Samaritans from Austria, Germany, Denmark, France, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Norway, Latvia, Italy, Poland and Ukraine. It cooperates with non-European Samaritan organisations from Gambia, South Africa, Russia, Romania and Switzerland.

The thirteen members contribute their extensive experience in the field of social services, rescue services, first-aid training and humanitarian aid overseas to the common work. The cooperation is also to be strengthened in disaster prevention and the development of international civil protection systems. SAINT serves to coordinate the activities among each other, to develop new cross-border partnerships and represents the interests of its members towards the European Union. In particular with regard to questions of emergency care the SAINT member organisations also practically support the development of a united Europe.

34 cf. www.samaritan.info
The new name spells the programme

In 1995, International Workers’ Aid changed its name to SOLIDAR and set up its offices in Brussels permanently. Hermann Buschfort was elected President and Giampiero Alhadeff took over as new Secretary General. Due to the number of new member organisations and the variety of fields they were active in, a diversification process on an international level started. New Working Groups and sub-committees were set up and SOLIDAR as a whole gained a new momentum.

SOLIDAR helped establish the European Platform of Social NGOs in 1995 and was accepted as an observer of the European Commission’s Development NGOs Liaison Committee (CLONG). Even before the budget crisis in 1998 SOLIDAR had developed a profile both as an organisation fighting for the recognition of NGOs from the European Union and lobbying at European level for general acceptance of their input in EU institutions and legislation. On the other hand SOLIDAR was promoting the idea of European citizenship among its member agencies. Both top-down and bottom-up work produced viable outcomes; even more when after 1997 Social Democrats in government caused a change in the composition of the Council of Europe. The Pan-European Round Table ‘Equity and Social Justice for all’, the project ‘Citizen’s Europe’ or the campaign for a Bill of Rights in the Amsterdam Treaty are just some of SOLIDAR’s successful initiatives during the late 1990s.

Activities were not confined to European borders though. Having consolidated its relations with the ILO and others, SOLIDAR was active on global social policy issues such as ‘Workers’ rights are human rights’ or ‘Global Trade Needs Global Rules’. SOLIDAR supported the ILO charter against child labour and initiated a campaign to stop violence against women. They allied with EURODAD in a debt relief campaign for those countries affected by hurricane Mitch.

1998 not only brought another increase in membership (a consortium of Italian members joined: COCIS, Progetto Sud, Progetto Sviluppo, Istituto Sindacale di Cooperazione allo Sviluppo (ISCOS) joined. All organisations in the Consortium then joined SOLIDAR again individually at a later date (see annex for date). IFWEA also joined this year) but also SOLIDAR’s first internet-hosted campaign: ‘Fight Racism’. Discovering the possibilities of this medium at a very early stage, SOLIDAR also started to distribute an email newsletter and provide information necessary for the work of its member agencies on its website.

In order to further improve collaboration among its members, a Humanitarian Aid Working Group was set up, which included SOLIDAR members engaged in relief work during the Kosovo Crisis and humanitarian aid and reconstruction in the Balkans.

By the time Lega Cooperative Bolzano joined in 1999, SOLIDAR had experienced significant growth and now was composed of 30 member organisations; many of which had strong links to the trade unions, leading to a stronger involvement with trade union Secretariats and their body of work, for example on the question of Core Labour Standards.

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35 Josef Weidenholzer: “The new name spells the programme: the European project will be completed if solidarity and social justice become the guiding principles of European policy. Solidarity is a common European value and not the privilege of individual national cultures.” Booklet “At your service. NGOs building a social Europe.” Brussels; 2002

36 Even though ‘SOLIDAR’ is a coinage, it has the advantage of being composed of one of the essential values of social democracy and the labour movement, solidarity.

37 Formally SOLIDAR was registered as International Association “SOLIDAR AISBL” under Belgian law on March 20th 1996.


39 The European Commission had frozen 900 million ECU already allocated to NGOs. SOLIDAR, through its members, lobbied effectively for a change in the EC’s dealings with NGOs by asking the Commission for consultation and reliability concerning funds.

International Federation of Workers Education Associations (IFWEA)\textsuperscript{17}

Beginning in 1922 the International Trade Union Federation held various conferences on workers’ education, and plans for more formalised cooperation were being discussed, but IFWEA was only founded after the Second World War in London in October 1947. In its first ten years it already included Workers’ Educational Associations in various countries outside Europe. In this it benefited from the connections that the English Workers’ Educational Association, WEA, had to organisations in the Dominions. Until 1969, and again from 1977 to 1986, the IFWEA headquarters were located at the WEA in London; when this was not the case, its headquarters were in Germany, Sweden, Austria, Israel and Norway. In 1996 IFWEA had over 60 members in many countries worldwide and, accordingly, it was decided in 1992 to regionalise IFWEA.

IFWEA seeks to provide access to education and lifelong learning for adults from all backgrounds and in particular to those who have previously missed out on education. To achieve this goal it brings together national and international trade unions, workers’ education associations, NGOs and social democratic foundations throughout the world.

\textsuperscript{17} Di Puppo, Roshan: Workers Rights are Human Rights. The necessity to link trade to core labour rights; SOLIDAR Briefing, Brussels 1998; “Global Trade Needs Global Rules”; SOLIDAR Briefing, Brussels 1999

\textsuperscript{42} EURODAD (European Network on Debt and Development) is a network of 54 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from 17 European countries working on issues related to debt, development finance and poverty reduction. The Eurodad network offers a platform for exploring issues, collecting intelligence and ideas, and undertaking collective advocacy.

\textsuperscript{43} Mitch hit Honduras in October 1998 and passed through Central America before ending as a tropical storm over Florida. Eleven thousand people were confirmed dead and nearly as many reported missing.

\textsuperscript{44} COCIS is an Italian federation of development NGOs. Progetto Sud, Progetto Sviluppo and ISCOS are NGOs linked to the Italian trade Unions UIL, CGIL and CISL.

\textsuperscript{45} As IFWEA is an international federation in itself, SOLIDAR not only accepted IFWEA as a new member but simultaneously joined IFWEA.


© SOLIDAR
Kathrin Schick, SOLIDAR, presents the Stop Violence Against Women Campaign petition to the UN.
Participating actively in society

The new millennium started with the ongoing debates about a social Europe, global justice and the advancement of human rights.

It also saw a real increase in collaboration between the Secretariat and member organisations. As staff numbers had gradually risen during the last decade, the Secretariat now consisted of up to nine persons, an internal division of work was made possible. The Secretariat and Board could now shadow each other and therefore provide better services to SOLIDAR members. Visits to and participation in member organisations’ events – such as conferences and seminars – and members’ visits to Brussels further strengthened the ties between SOLIDAR and its organisations. The Silver Rose Awards were established in 2000 as a means to gain further publicity and promote SOLIDAR’s values. It quickly rose to a fixture in the Brussels calendar and many of the nominees stayed in close contact with SOLIDAR.

In 2003 when Manfred Ragati stepped down as President a first reorganisation and reorientation process had been completed. The structure of the Board was changed dramatically as it now consisted of only 7 individuals plus the chairs of the Committees. The former North Group had been renamed the ‘Social Affairs Committee’ and the South Group ‘International Cooperation Committee’, to better reflect the matters they cared about and stood for. So when Pierre Schori took over as President in 2004 (from interim President Angeles Yarnez-Barnuevo) two of today’s main pillars, social policy and international cooperation were already firmly established in SOLIDAR’s structure.

SOLIDAR’s activities both on international and European level - for example in the Global League for Education, its activities on the Lisbon Strategy and the issue of lifelong learning, as well as La Ligue de l’Enseignement’s joining SOLIDAR - set-up the foundations for a new pillar of activities. Having already been a topic of interest under the roof of the Social Affairs Committee, education was finally established as SOLIDAR’s third pillar in 2006 and an Education Committee was formally set-up.

“SOLIDAR’s member organisations have a long tradition rooting in the labour movement. As civil society movement they contribute to social cohesion on local level, promote civic action and mobilize social capital. They establish fora in which people organise on local, regional, national and European level to participate actively in the societies they live in.”; booklet: “Herausforderungen durch Markt und Wettbewerb. SOLIDAR Organisationen als Anbieter von sozialen Diensten”;


From 1996 to 2003 every member organisation was incorporated into the Board through a Vice President. Additionally there was a President, a Secretary General and a first Vice President.

Pierre Schori, born 1938; Secretary General of Sweden’s foreign ministry 1982–91, later Member of the Cabinet 1994–99 and Deputy Foreign Minister responsible for issues of foreign aid and migration; Ambassador to the United Nations; SOLIDAR President 2004-2007

Angeles Yarnez-Barnuevo; Director of Solidaridad Internacional 1988-2000; acting SOLIDAR President 2003-2004

A full overview of SOLIDAR’s current structure can be found in the annex.
La Ligue de l’Enseignement et de l’Education Permanente

La Ligue was set up in 1866 on the initiative of Jean Macé, a teacher, who was convinced that without education in adult suffrage, democracy could never take long-term root. La Ligue’s aim was to promote access to education and cultural development for all and helping to set up non-denominational, free compulsory schooling and marshalling public energies to promote citizenship.

In 1872 La Ligue achieved a first success when more than 1.3 million signatures were collected for the petition for a free of charge, mandatory and non-denominational education. La Ligue defined itself as a public service organisation and a political and ideological pressure group of the anticlerical left; the Vichy government in 1942 therefore disbanded it. Only one year later it was re-established in Algeria and in 1944 was officially recognised as an organisation in liberated France.

In 1968 La Ligue saw a transformation in its approach; from mere popular education its focus shifted to socio-cultural animation. Communities replaced schools as the organisation’s top priority.

Today La Ligue is active in the fields of education, solidarity and citizenship. It acts as an umbrella organisation for more than 33,000 voluntary organisations which provide community education and sporting activities for children – including holiday camps, they run community health centres, provide adult education and carry out international solidarity operations.

cf. www.laligue.org
To cover other relevant fields SOLIDAR decided to set up Working Groups, for example on Migration, Enlargement or Cooperation in the field. All of them having a lead agency and being open to any member organisation that is active in the area.

The Cooperation in the Field Working Group – successor of the Humanitarian Aid Working Group – brings together SOLIDAR members who work in humanitarian aid and development projects, be it in collaborating with ECHO (the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office), in supporting the SOLIDAR platform in Nicaragua, in raising 3 million Euros for Iraq and Darfur, or through relief actions of which the Sri Lanka and India Consortia - established in the aftermath of the tsunami - are an example.

When in December 2004 the tsunami hit the coast of South-East Asia, SOLIDAR members rushed to help. Apart from first aid measures, SOLIDAR is still active in implementing long-term measures such as bringing assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, rebuilding schools and other important infrastructure, implementing income-generating, education and women’s empowerment programmes.

The Balkan Network Working Group – like the Enlargement Working Group – is active in strengthening ties to welfare organisations, lobbying for a less neo-liberal approach of governments to social services and services of general interest and by encouraging the national organisations and national platforms to join in achieving a more pan-European character of SOLIDAR.

The main focus of this work with the New Member States is promoting a social dimension in the EU Enlargement process, strengthening civil society dialogue and putting forth the concerns being voiced by NGOs in the New Member States to the European level.

Campaign work during the last eight years has spanned a broad range of subjects and a variety of input. The topic of social services was covered within the Save Our Social Europe campaign, which ran from 2006 to 2007 and which has left an annual conference on the topic of social Europe as a legacy.

SOLIDAR was the leading player in Europe in the Global Call to Action against Poverty launched in 2005 – the largest ever global anti-poverty campaign. It actively contributed to the promotion of the campaign goals: delivering trade justice, more and better aid, full debt cancellation and transparency and accountability from all governments in their plans to eliminate poverty and reach the Millennium Development Goals.

54 The SOLIDAR Consortium in Sri Lanka consists of Norwegian People’s Aid, Germany’s Arbeiterbund and Swiss Labour Assistance, supported by many more (Progetto Sviluppo, Solidarité Laique, La Ligue, APHEDA, Volkshilfe, FCD and FAO). In 2006 they were working on a programme of 30 million Euros. The SOLIDAR India consortium is made up of: Volkshilfe, Progetto Sviluppo, La Ligue de l’Enseignement and Solidarité Laique.

55 The Enlargement Working Group was active in preparation of the accession of 10 New Member States to the European Union in 2004. Chaired by Austrian Volkshilfe, it led to the establishment of closer ties with organisations in Central and Eastern Europe and their affiliation at the 2008 Annual General Assembly.

56 SOS Europe was renamed in 2007 to Support Our Social Europe.
The Decent Work Decent Life Campaign spans both international and social policy issues, with SOLIDAR working in close alliance with the ETUC, ITUC, Global Progressive Forum and World Solidarity Movement to promote Decent Work as the core of policy and decision making at all levels. SOLIDAR is simultaneously running a three-year project: Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Decent Work for Development, exploring the link between the creation of decent work and sustainable development. The Alliance launched and promotes a Call to Action and SOLIDAR encourages its member organisations to become active in the collection of signatures.

SOLIDAR also started coordinating development education projects and encouraged its member organisations to exchange experiences and share information through seminars and briefings. Anti-discrimination work continued in close collaboration with the European Anti Racism Network (ENAR), International Lesbian and Gay Europe (ILGA) and Eurolink Age. The topic of migrant domestic workers was covered in collaboration with Respect, the migrant domestic workers network. More recently SOLIDAR was a partner in the ISCOS project ‘Transnational learning for civil society organisations in New Member States’. This development education project carried out in the New Member States aimed to improve the capacity of NGOs and trade unions in New Member States, increase political awareness on the labour conditions in developing countries and create links with developing countries.

To achieve its goals SOLIDAR works in alliance with institutions and NGOs both on a European and a global level. Apart from the European institutions; e.g. Parliament, Commission, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions, with which SOLIDAR has good working relations; the ITUC and ETUC have been and still are special partners on many occasions. While the ITUC has been a partner since the early 1950s, collaboration with the ETUC developed gradually following SOLIDAR’s involvement with European Social Policy. Cooperation is not limited to the Global and the European Union’s Secretariat, as over the years SOLIDAR has established good contacts with regional committees and national trade unions, too.

SOLIDAR often played a lead role – either in founding networks or in filling them with life. In 2003 it helped to lay the foundations of CONCORD, the European NGO confederation for relief and development. Giampiero Alhadef acted as Board member and treasurer, and now International Cooperation Coordinator, Andrea Maksimovic also is an active Board Member. Furthermore SOLIDAR continued its involvement in the Social Platform. Having not only been active in the establishment of the Platform, SOLIDAR also was the grant keeper for the Platform at the turn of the millennium. The Platform’s goal of fighting “for the advancement of the principles of equality, solidarity, non-discrimination, and the promotion of respect for fundamental rights, within Europe and in particular the European Union” matches with SOLIDAR’s aims in this field. In 2008, Conny Reuter became the President of the Social Platform. In 2005 SOLIDAR supported the creation of the European Civil Society Platform on Life-Long Learning (EUCIS-LLL) and Jean Marc Roirant (La Ligue de l’Enseignement) was elected as its first President.

57 For example “Justice & Equity in the Global Market”.
58 SOLIDAR started working in this field in 1997. The project involved Kalyaan, ETUC, ICFTU, Anti Slavery International Commission for Filipino Migrants and several migrant women domestic workers organisations from Spain, Italy, Germany, France and Greece. Respect was formally launched in July 1998.
59 Countries involved in the project were Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta and Cyprus.
60 These include the ICFTU/ITUC, ETUC, Global Progressive Forum, ILO, Socialist Group in the European Parliament, EUCIS-LLL, Social Platform, CONCORD, EU Civil Society Contact Group, EESC NGO Liaison Group, World Social Forum, EU Trade Network, Party of European Socialists, the European Policy Centre, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Friends of Europe, amongst others.
61 ITUC was founded in October 2006 in Vienna through a merger of ICFTU and WCA. The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.
62 Leaflet “what is the social platform”; www.socialplatform.org
Concerning membership numbers, the new millennium so far brought another significant increase. SOLIDAR welcomed Humanitas (The Netherlands), Olof Palme International Centre (Sweden) and Instituto Sindical de Cooperacion al Desarrollo (Spain) as full members in 2000. In 2001 Workers’ Educational Association TSL (Finland), in 2006 Fagligt Internationalt Center (Denmark) and Pour la Solidarité (Belgium) joined. At the 2007 Annual General Assembly, Assamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz (Spain) and Féderation Leo Lagrange (France) became part of SOLIDAR.

Work with the organisations in the New Member States also paid off. As many of the organisations were relatively small or focused on one distinct cause, the SOLIDAR Board in 2005 had decided to encourage the formation of national platforms in countries where there are no strong social or development NGOs who are part of the labour movement. Following an amendment to the statutes in 2006 which gave national platforms the possibility to join the network; the Baltic Platform became members at the 2007 General Assembly. But organisational development – both on membership and statutory level - has not yet come to a halt, as many other organisations in the New Member States are either in good contact with or already affiliated SOLIDAR members.

The Global Network today seeks to empower activists in civil society organisations and trade unions to improve their capacity for dialogue with international institutions such as the WTO, the ILO, The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

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The Baltic Platform

Generally, civil society in the Baltic states (as in most ex-soviet countries) is not very active. Nevertheless, the labour movement organisations do cooperate a lot in the region; trying to bring forces together for a better representation of employees and the development of decent knowledge-based societies.

The Johannes Mihkelson Centre is an educational centre providing education for trade unions and unemployed people. The centre’s aim is to balance Estonian society democratically through different trainings, seminars, and conferences; consulting NGOs and various publicity works. It implements different leadership and democracy trainings and integration camps for Estonian youngsters in Estonia and abroad, especially in the Russian Federation. JMC is a member of Estonian Education Forum and Open Estonian Education Society. Cooperation with Johannes Mihkelson Centre (JMC) existed as early as 2005 when SOLIDAR and JMC held a seminar on the constitutional treaty in Tallinn, which was followed by a publication in English, French, German and Estonian. JMC is also involved in Decent Work and the transnational learning projects.

LBAS is the national Latvian trade union confederation. It is affiliated to both ITUC and ETUC and as a member of the Baltic Platform also participates in SOLIDAR activities. Most recently the President, Pēteris Krīgers, opened the Decent Work Decent Life Call to Action signature collection in Latvia together with the President of SOLIDAR, Josef Weidenholzer.

Lithuanian Labour Education Society (LLES) was established as an initiative to unite both education and training facilities and resources of the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, Social Democratic Youth Union, Young Falcons, trade unions and some other labour movement organisations, as well as coordinate educational activities among them. The aforementioned organisations are collective members of LLES. LLES has issued books on adult education and lifelong learning in order to spread the idea of history and experience of people’s education more widely. The society also organises different courses and study circles, both for leaders and members. It has been cooperating with SOLIDAR for some years and is involved in Decent Work and Transnational Learning projects. It also assists the development of independent trade unions and NGOs in Belarus. LLES is also a member of IFWEA.
The current president of SOLIDAR is Josef Weidenholzer\(^65\) who took over the role in 2007. He is supported by Conny Reuter\(^66\), who in 2006, followed Giampiero Alhadeff as Secretary General.

Under their aegis, the statutes have been amended once more to provide a better framework for SOLIDAR’s work\(^67\). The New Orientation Framework Process, started to find a new balance between SOLIDAR’s roles – advocating at European and international level, liaising between international institutions and promoting cooperation between members – and clearly showed the desire for a long-term strategy. While SOLIDAR’s work will still be based on short-term strategic plans, a strategic debate ‘SOLIDAR 2020’ will be launched in the coming months.

Although SOLIDAR has undergone many changes in the last 60 years, expanded its fields of action and redefined itself as an European network of NGOs and labour movement organisations, the quote from the cover of the very first news bulletin in 1951 still sums up perfectly what SOLIDAR stands for:

“The individual can only feel free and confident about his future in a humane world guided by the principles of solidarity and justice.”

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\(^65\) Dr. Josef Weidenholzer, born 1950; Chair of the institute for social policy at Linz university; President of Volkshilfe since 1991.

\(^66\) Conny Reuter, born 1954; responsible for German-French collaboration and European affairs at La Ligue de l’Enseignement from 1985-1998; Head of division at the German-French Youth Foundation 1998-2006; Secretary General of SOLIDAR since 2006.

\(^67\) As of 2009, the President and the Vice Presidents will be incorporated into the Board and there will no longer be a Chair of the Board.
When Austrian Volkshilfe was founded in 1947 it was able to revert to ideas, activist contacts and experiences from its predecessor organisation Societas. One thing differed though, Volkshilfe still felt closely related to Social Democracy but they emphasised their desire to help anyone in need, regardless of political belief or party membership.

Volkshilfe closely cooperated with Swiss, Danish and Swedish organisations and through their help was able to provide children with warm meals and distribute food, clothes and medicine to those in need. Since 1949 Austrian Volkshilfe ran a lottery to raise funds to help victims of natural disasters.

Knowing from experience how much difference a single aid shipment makes, Volkshilfe started its very own form of development aid: the Austria package including staple foods, school material, medicine or seeds. Between 1981 and 1983, 250,000 packages were sent to people in need all over the world. To those in refugee camps, those affected by famine, earthquakes or floods or those participating in a development programme led by Volkshilfe. Apart from these aid shipments development aid was mostly centred on reconstruction work. Volkshilfe built houses, homes, schools, hospitals and whole villages, for example in Western Sahara, Montenegro, Algeria, Nicaragua and Lebanon.

On the national level, Volkshilfe increased its activities in the field of social services. Home care services, care for the sick and elderly and socio-economic projects for the long-term unemployed, people with handicaps and disadvantaged youth were established. At the same time Volkshilfe started campaigning for awareness of poverty in Austria and for the right to asylum.

After the war in Yugoslavia, Austria saw an influx of refugees. Volkshilfe cared for those refugees by erecting homes and shelters and establishing information centres to help families start a new life in Austria. During the 1990s Volkshilfe also started several bilateral projects in Eastern Europe (Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, Albania and Montenegro) seeking to strengthen civil society through help and support.

The new millennium saw a drive for the victims of the floods in Austria and Eastern Europe in 2002, and in 2004 after the tsunami, Volkshilfe together with several partners started a long-term project in South-India to help reconstruction and develop the region sustainably. This quickly grew into the biggest project in Volkshilfe’s history. In Sri Lanka and after an earthquake in Java relief measures were organised. Volkshilfe also runs a mobile hospital in Albania and is continuously lobbying for the European Social Model. In 2006, Volkshilfe kick-started the campaign ‘SOS Save Our Social Europe’ with a conference in Vienna, and further conferences then took place in Berlin and Paris.

Volkshilfe today is both a modern provider of social services, a social movement and part of the civil society. It is therefore not only actively involved in commenting on topics of social policy and campaigning for a social and just world for everyone but also engaged in the field of humanitarian aid and care economy.

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68 Cf. ‘60 Jahre Volkshilfe. Mit brennenden Herzen gegen die Not”; Volkshilfe Magazin Sonderausgabe; Vienna 2007
69 Although work had started after the First World War, ‘Societas’, as an organisation, was not founded until 1921. Until its prohibition in 1934 (and illegally afterwards) it was active in the fields of dispensing food, education on hygiene and medicine, the erection of recreation homes for children and grown-ups and home care. It closely collaborated with welfare and labour organisations from other countries.
Conny Reuter, Secretary General of SOLIDAR

“L’avenir est un long passé!” [The future is a long past!]

This song from the French rap group ‘Manau’ from Brittany is like the leitmotiv for SOLIDAR’s 60th anniversary.

There is a long past behind us full of commitments, struggles, campaigns, projects, achievements and defeats. Even if ‘the end of history’ is often proclaimed, the failures and weaknesses of the system that we live in still produce inequalities, exploitation, poverty, social exclusion and war, and denies fundamental human and social rights.

Facing the current crises in the fields of finances, energy, environment and others, where would be without civil society organisations like our members? Where would we be on the European and international level without our allies and partners?

This book of history traces the development of both IWA and SOLIDAR as part of the labour and progressive movement in Europe and in the world. This would not have been possible without the active citizens within our member organisations and the professional and political leadership in both member organisations and SOLIDAR. The reasons that led COMISCO members to create IWA, which later became SOLIDAR, are still valid: the need for more social justice and a fair globalisation.

For me as Secretary General, it is more than a pleasure to serve this organisation, it is a mission to contribute to the development of SOLIDAR by consolidating the three pillars our work is based upon: social affairs, international cooperation and education.

After the very successful period of building up SOLIDAR after 1995, led by my predecessor Giampiero Alhadeff, it is now time to find the necessary balance between the involvement of members and initiatives from the Secretariat, to underline our European commitment, to develop the work with all European institutions and to foster our international influence and visibility through the Global Network.

Important steps have been made in the past two years to develop and consolidate membership, in particular in the New Member States, and we will continue in this way in order to become a real pan-European network.
Based on our values, we will succeed because we have strong leadership, strong member organisations, strong allies like the Socialist International, PES, ITUC and ETUC and strong partners through the alliances that we contribute to in the frame of the three platforms EUCIS-LLL, CONCORD and the SOCIAL PLATFORM.

And lastly, we are strong because we have, and have had, very competent and highly committed staff in the SOLIDAR Secretariat.

The future lies ahead of us! Together, stronger!
CONTRIBUTIONS

Willy Brandt †, former President of Socialist International

Our shared future: awareness and action

Much still remains to be done if the programme for survival proposed a decade ago by North-South Commission is to be realized.

It is almost ten years since the North-South Commission, of which I was Chairman, submitted its reports. In the intervening period, the Palme and Brundtland Commissions have also produced major reports. We can say therefore that the problems are known. Practicable solutions have been put forward, important findings have been published which can be acted upon, and researchers, politicians and interested members of the public have the opportunity to discuss the whole issue.

Nevertheless, it is sometimes with a feeling approaching resignation that we realize that far too little is actually happening. In many developing countries their difficulties have worsened, and they have fallen still further behind the industrialized countries. There is the same urgent need to do something to remedy famine and drought, inadequate medical care, horrendous debts and calamitous interference with the ecological balance, as there is to reduce the heavy burden of arms expenditure, which continues in spite of the limited though encouraging progress made in relations between the superpowers.

I welcome the choice of “Interdependence and Solidarity” as the theme for the campaign as it highlights the close interrelationships between North and South and the causes and effects of the commercial initiatives that each side takes (or fails to take). Obviously, full account must also be taken of problems connected with East-West relations. I have frequently spoken of the unrecognized instances of interdependence, particularly the connection between the stockpiling of arms and underdevelopment. Nobody can seriously claim that isolated attempts to find solutions achieve much, although such efforts are still being made.

Undesirable developments in Third World countries put Europe at risk while the effects of our mistakes are felt in the Third World. Something must be done to remedy energy problems, the consequences of soil erosion, the spread of the deserts and the inroads which are being made into the rain forests. It was not by chance that the North-South Commission’s report was entitled “A Programme for Survival”, and its reference to “mutual interests between North and South” was a clear allusion to interdependence. The aforementioned commissions adopted an objective approach and their significance has gone on growing; experience has shown that the goals set in their reports can only be achieved by constant new calls for results. Hence the need for sustained and very strenuous efforts to arouse greater public awareness which, combined with the appropriate action, will bring us a little closer to the desired political transformation.
However, enhancing awareness is neither a static nor a sporadic process; it is certainly not a task which can be completed overnight. It has to be dynamic, continuous and as broadly based as possible.

Hardly anyone would dispute the fact that it has long been impossible for a single industrialized country to reverse the present vicious — even assuming that it really had the political will to do so. It is more likely that Europe as a whole could do so, but it would still not be easy. It is encouraging, at any rate, that the Lisbon declaration of 1984 has led to a simultaneous, Europe-wide campaign which has met with approval in many quarters.

It is precisely because the situation in many developing countries ranges from the depression to the disastrous that their peoples have a greater need than ever of a generous response from us in Europe. I should like to appeal to individuals to give active support to ensure the success of the North-South campaign. By doing so, we are not just supporting the people in the affected areas, however important this may be in itself, but at the same time making a positive contribution through our behaviour in the industrialized countries to our shared future — and to the survival for the coming generations.

Can we fail to be moved by the fact that every day large numbers of children die whose lives could have been saved? Who still dares to ignore the large-scale destruction that is being inflicted on the tropical forests every year and the major climatic changes that will result for all of us? Our children and grand-children are going to ask us what we did, or failed to do, to prevent such climatic disaster, and what action we took, or failed to take, to help put an end to epidemics and famines.

If we cooperate to find solutions to these problems and if we draw attention to the unrecognized instances of interdependence, we shall have made a worthwhile investment in our shared future. This can happen only if joint action is taken by large numbers of people in many different countries. Anyone who talks of a lack of funds can hardly expect to be taken seriously, when we know that more than one thousand million dollars are spent on arms every year.

Viewed in this light, the Council of Europe campaign must be seen as the beginning of a vast movement.

Taken from ‘The World is everyone’s concern’ booklet produced for SOLIDAR’s 40th Anniversary in 1988.
Social Justice – the Missing Link in Globalization

The ILO, born in 1919 out of the ravages of war, was founded on the presumption that “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.”

In a world where the conditions of labour involved such severe hardship and privation to so many, it was charged with promoting social justice for all in and through the world of work. SOLIDAR’s predecessor organization “International Workers’ Aid” was founded in 1948 to “counter the emergence of social injustice and take part in the resolution of social problems.” SOLIDAR continues to further social policies, education and international cooperation in Europe and in the South in support of this goal.

Trade unions and NGOs like SOLIDAR have been invaluable allies of the ILO, supporting its values and principles including in difficult times, and untiringly working for their translation into action. Today all who are concerned with equity and fairness as well as those who wish to ensure the sustainability of globalization, are confronted with the common challenge of globalizing social justice.

Decent work, the contemporary expression of the ILO’s historical mandate, sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. Decent work is central to the fulfilment of individuals and to human dignity; to the stability of communities and societies. To this end, decent work covers four strategic objectives: standards and fundamental principles and rights at work comprising freedom of association and collective bargaining; freedom from child labour, from forced labour and from discrimination; productive work and the creation of jobs including through enterprise creation; safe work, and security when there is no work or people cannot work; and social dialogue that allows women and men to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Gender and development are cross-cutting themes of the Decent Work Agenda. Based on universal principles, it respects national specificity and national autonomy, offering no one size fits all solutions.

This 21st century vision of the ILO’s mission resonated in many quarters and at different levels. It is not difficult to understand why. Today, too many have been excluded from the benefits of globalization. For them globalization has meant increasing poverty and precariousness. And both the poor and the middle classes have witnessed growing inequality and experienced growing anxiety about the future.
The social foundation that is key to sustaining the benefits of open economies and open societies has been too weak to carry the weight of rapid economic and technological development which, more often than not, appears to have lost sight of the fact that labour is not a commodity. The concerns and fears about globalization have been due in no small part to the experience of a globalization bereft of social justice.

The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization established by the ILO and comprising representatives of diverse interests and viewpoints, observed that globalization had developed in an ethical vacuum and called for a fair globalization, “a globalization with a social dimension which sustains human values and enhances the well-being of people, in terms of their freedom, prosperity and security.”

The Decent Work Agenda and the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization stimulated a global debate on the social underpinnings of globalization and the achievement of a fair globalization. The result is that the objectives of decent work for all and a fair globalisation have received far reaching recognition and support by the UN at large, by regional organisations, by countries, by social partners and by wider civil society.

At its inception, the ILO was charged with developing international labour standards, in the form of Conventions and Recommendations backed by a supervisory system, in all matters related to work. This was instituted as the principal means of action for improving labour conditions and redressing the intolerable social injustices in the world of work. Since then, the ILO has renewed its mandate over time in response to the challenges of different historical moments. The Philadelphia Declaration of 1944 which now forms part of its Constitution was one such milestone. Driven by the experience of mass unemployment and poverty during the Great Depression, the Organization adopted a broader perspective acknowledging that “poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere” and charted its future course on this understanding of the interdependence of social, economic and political processes. In 1998, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow up built on the rights-based commitments of the World Summit for Social Development which had achieved a consensus on promoting social development and social justice based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, poverty eradication and full employment.

In 2008, on the eve of the ILO’s 90th Anniversary, the International Labour Conference adopted its third major statement of principles and policies - a landmark ‘Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization’. This Declaration connects the Decent Work Agenda with the founding principles of the Organization while situating them in the present context of globalization, and it affirms the role of decent work in achieving a fair globalization. With standards and rights - the original means of action - at its core, the Declaration retrieves the integrated approach of the World Summit for Social Development stressing that the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda are “inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive. The Declaration sets out the responsibility of Members to contribute, through their economic and social policy, to the realization of a global and integrated strategy for the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. It identifies steps that could be taken by Members to this end, including a review of their situation as regards the ratification or implementation of ILO instruments so as to achieve a progressively increasing coverage of each of the strategic objectives, with special emphasis on core labour standards as well as those regarded as most significant in terms of governance — those covering tripartism, employment policy and labour inspection. Also significant is that it codified freedom of association and collective bargaining as the enabling rights for the realisation of social justice.

This new Declaration represents an opportunity and responsibility to reinforce the capacity of the International Labour Organization to forge an effective and creative response to the global demand for decent work. For all who share the objectives of the Declaration, it is now a collective mission to advance the Decent Work Agenda in steering a course towards social justice for a fair globalization.

There are formidable challenges ahead. There are a number of areas where SOLIDAR’s experience can be particularly valuable in forging globalization’s missing link of social justice through the promotion of decent work:

• Defending rights at work;
• Extending social protection;
• Protecting domestic workers;
• Making development strategies also strategies for decent work.
As SOLIDAR celebrates its 60th Anniversary, the ILO also celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and one year later, the 60th anniversary of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 97). Freedom of association and collective bargaining underpin effective social dialogue and tripartism that are cornerstones of the integrated Decent Work Agenda. Strong social partners supported by civil society are key to ensuring that these rights are universally respected. SOLIDAR has an important role to play.

Only 20 per cent of the world’s population has adequate social security coverage. Social security protects, liberates, and empowers women and men. It is also an instrument of flexibility and adaptability in changing times. SOLIDAR is well placed to be an advocate for the extension of social security.

Domestic workers have commonly been neglected in national and international law and they are highly vulnerable. The International Labour Conference will have a standard-setting item on domestic workers on its Agenda in 2010 and 2011. SOLIDAR can be a powerful force in moving towards decent work for domestic workers.

Employment and decent work are increasingly recognised by internationally agreed development frameworks as key factors in combating poverty and promoting sustainable development. But this support now needs to be translated into concrete commitments in national development, in regional cooperation and in development cooperation policies. SOLIDAR can be a powerful voice in making this a reality.

No cause advances without the power and propulsion of social mobilization and a social movement. SOLIDAR together with the International Trade Union Confederation, the European Trade Union Confederation, Social Alert International and the Global Progressive Forum, launched the “Decent Work, Decent Life Campaign” at the World Social Forum in Nairobi in January 2007. It includes the ‘Call to Action for Decent Work’ which urges governments to ratify and implement the ILO’s standards and to put decent work at the heart of their policy-making.

The Campaign has also established the ‘Decent Work Day’ on 7 October, a celebration of decent work throughout the world for the first time in 2008.

Such mobilization and the pressure for change that promotes social justice must be relentless. The work of SOLIDAR and others is indispensable in motivating governments and other stakeholders to implement decent work for social justice and a fair globalization – nationally, regionally and internationally. Through such action we can establish decent work as the foundation of a new social contract that makes globalization work for people.
Guy Ryder, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

SOLIDAR and the ITUC: fighting together for a Decent Work and a Decent Life

SOLIDAR’s predecessor organisation International Workers’ Aid (IWA) was founded in 1948, at a time when founding organisations of today’s ITUC were preparing to launch one of the ITUC’s own predecessors the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). Over the fifty-seven years succeeding its creation the following year, the ICFTU - and to an increasing extent the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and many non-affiliated trade union centres - became closely involved with the IWA and then with SOLIDAR. That cooperation is entirely to be expected, given the founding mission of the IWA to “counter the emergence of social injustice and take part in the resolution of social problems”, very much the same objectives as of the ICFTU and those of the ITUC today.

Our shared history of close and effective cooperation makes the ITUC proud to provide this contribution to SOLIDAR’s 60 years Book of History. SOLIDAR has played a critical role in the workers’ movement. Our work together constitutes a story written by millions of people of successive generations in the workers’ movement, whose achievement has not only been to better the lives of working families across the globe but even, at critical moments, to change the path of history.

The goals SOLIDAR was established to pursue in 1948 have much in common with those we face in 2008, even if they manifest themselves in ways which look very different, and the principles which inspired the founders of SOLIDAR remain those that continue to guide us today in the ITUC.

In this age of globalisation these challenges will only be met successfully by strengthening the workers’ movement and rendering it still more effective. A major focus of our joint work has been our activities to change the nature of globalisation so that it begins to work for working people. The objectives of decent work for all and attaining a fair globalisation have received a fair measure of recognition and support by governments at a range of international meetings. We must now convert such support into concrete changes in national and international policies. SOLIDAR must be a strong ally in making this a concrete achievement.

At the moment of writing, the need for urgent and fundamental change in globalisation has never been more evident. With the world struggling to stave off the spectre of collapse in the financial system, the time has come to act decisively to put globalisation on a fair, responsible and sustainable path. The joint efforts of trade unions and their civil society and political allies will be central to making this happen.
With international trade so critically important to our agenda, over recent decades it has often been the centrepiece of our joint work. At a range of international meetings leading up to, most recently, our successful joint work in Hong Kong in December 2005 at the WTO’s 6th Ministerial Conference we have worked hard to have the social dimensions of trade properly addressed. The impasse in trade negotiations at the current time lends force to our joint arguments that the current approaches need to be reviewed in a very basic way but also confirms that our work in this field must remain a priority.

Our shared commitment to the struggle against discrimination in all its forms and to winning equal treatment for all has been at the forefront of another part of our joint work. This includes our collaboration on the subject of migrant workers. The world urgently needs an adequate multilateral policy framework for orderly and fair migration, and migrant workers urgently need full respect and protection of their rights and interests. The ITUC and SOLIDAR have worked together on both fronts.

A key element of our joint work has been our campaigning. Experience shows that to engage the interest and energies of working people in international work, to attract wider public attention, and to have impact, we need to address priority issues in the world of work through actions which go beyond the formalisms of international meetings and declarations. In this decade we have worked together to take a lead role in the Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) as well as at the World Social Forum.

In October 2007, SOLIDAR together with the ITUC, the European Trade Union Confederation, Social Alert International and the Global Progressive Forum launched the ‘Call to Action for Decent Work’ at the ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalisation in Lisbon. Today, we are working closely with SOLIDAR towards the ‘World Day for Decent Work’ on 7 October 2008, urging governments to put decent work at the heart of their policy-making.

This year of SOLIDAR’s 60th Anniversary is also the 60th anniversary of ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise. SOLIDAR has a major role to play in supporting the ITUC to ensure that these rights are respected. And in 2008, the International Labour Conference adopted the ‘Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization’. As we plan for our future activities, we must work together in using this new tool to build our case for a global and integrated strategy for the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.
As we look back on our achievements, we must recall too that millions of human beings go to bed each night hungry; that war and conflict are still destroying lives and countries in a way which must alarm and revolt us in equal measure; and that, despite the progress made, democracy and basic human rights remain a distant prospect for much of humanity.

All of this means that as we look to the future, it is more essential than ever that the ITUC and SOLIDAR work towards a better world where all working people can live in conditions of dignity, liberty, and safety, bound by ties of solidarity and fraternity forged in a new internationalism that we shall build together.

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Ralph Coeckelberghs, former Secretary General of Solidarité Socialiste FCD

HOW DID YOU START IN SOLIDAR?

Being new as General Secretary of Solidarité Socialiste – FCD – which already was an IWA member, I attended for the first time an executive committee meeting in Oslo in April 1979. The meeting took place in Oslo because it also was the year of NPA’s 50 years anniversary. Being one of the founding organisations – the first IWA president was Belgian - we had received an invitation every year, but we only started to attend IWA meetings at the beginning of 1979 after a heavy internal crisis. Having arrived at the meeting I realised that there were only traditional social items on the agenda and the meeting in itself was more of an exchange and reflection group. As far as I remember Fritz Tepperwien (ASB Germany) left an impression on me because he was the first one to introduce an international dimension by promoting actions of solidarity with the people of Western Sahara.

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROJECTS WHEN YOU WERE THERE?

During these years there was no palpable action. Common understanding, a small initiative here and there if a member organisation asked for assistance. After the meeting had ended there were neither results nor any precise decisions and hence I sat there in front of all my documents, feeling a little frustrated. Richard Haar (then Secretary General of IWA and AWO) approached me asking if there was a problem. I explained to him that I felt frustrated, disappointed and that I had had the idea to discuss some matters at hand. It was the morrow of the Sandinistas’ victory which had been supported by the Socialist International and nothing of it had been put on the agenda because it was not scheduled and unusual. He told me to come see him in Bonn to discuss the matter with him at his office and I left Bonn with about 100,000 German Marks as a subsidy for social and solidarity projects. This was the start of a time of bilateral contacts… particularly with ASB, Volkshilfe, NPA, SAH and others. At that moment I had got the notion that this did work, especially as AWO established contact with one member and another one and another one. But there still was no real multilateral coordination in-between all of us.

HOW DID THE ORGANISATION EVOLVE IN THE PERIOD YOU WERE BEING ACTIVE IN THE NETWORK?

I tried to identify who were the partners that were being active in the same countries on the same issues and hence I tried to coordinate and assist in certain projects while at the same time campaigning to find one joint/common project carried out by IWA as umbrella. I’ve seen that in other like-minded organisation (e.g. Caritas or APRODEV) the level of coordination was high and the non-confessional ones did not coordinate this often.

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This interview was originally conducted in French. Special thanks go to Nathalie Duveiller – intern at SOLIDAR – for providing the transcript.
And with AWO being of the opinion that we could not ask European Union for funding because our member organisations from Norway, Israel and Switzerland were not members of the EU, we had to wait until 1985 until I succeeded in summoning Anton Reithinger (then head of unit of DG VIII) to explain to us how subsidies could in fact be granted for all. This was the kick-off for our common projects – Nicaragua, Cape Verde and Mozambique. AWO in the name of IWA took over coordination.

But frustration was not far away. In 1988 when hurricane Joan hit Nicaragua, four different IWA organisations were present in the country. I tried to have us collaborate but this did not really work out. We did not succeed in coordinating but it was a good first step (today SOLIDAR does much better, as the SOLIDAR Consortium in Sri Lanka proves).

My second main interest was the fact that IWA needed to grow to be able to survive and gain influence and efficiency. I therefore took a lot of trips in the name of my organisation and in the name of AWO. The foundation for enlargement was set with the joining of Olof Palme Centre, ISF Finland with its president Helena Laukko, Evert Vermeer Stichting from the Netherlands. On the occasion of a conference of Solidaridad Democrática, Solidaridad Internacional, which had been invited, joined. La Ligue had been invited too, but was not willing to join yet. OFFICO, an affiliate of La Ligue, did join though. IWA as an organisation became more diverse both on an international level but also by establishing partnerships with countries from the South. This gave IWA an international drive.

Some time later, James Firebrace initiated the joining of War on Want. We did also negotiate – due to Vasconcellos in Cape Verde – with the Instituto de Estudios para o Desenvolvimiento – IED. IWA at that time was able to considerably increase its number of members.

Conscious of the enormous potential of IWA, I argued for the establishing of a liaison office in Brussels and when we realised that it was possible to carry out common projects while being financed by the European Union, I quit at Solidarité Socialiste to start at the IWA office. On January 1st 1987 the liaison office in Brussels was opened. The only precondition for me was to learn German, and after a month of intensive language course, strong support being given to me by AWO and ASB, I started to reunite the whole world. At regular intervals I took trips to Bonn and other places all over Europe. From January 1987 to May 1992 there was an enormous rise in collaboration and IWA together with the Council of Europe carried out a substantial project: The Campaign on North-South interdependence and solidarity. The world is everyone’s concern was published in three languages as the very first publication in 1988. In 1992, the second activity that played an important role (on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the ‘discovery’ of America) was the publication of “Europe and Latin America. From a common past to a better future”. It did include a trade union perspective and was, as I said, the second campaign that had been negotiated in Brussels. It was launched at a themed conference in Huelva. Lacking experience and means, all the coordination was done by telephone or fax. Fortunately today there is the internet!

74 Hurricane Joan hit Nicaragua as a category 4 hurricane and caused a damage of approximately 2 billion dollars (worth US$3.5 billion in 2007) and killing more than 200 persons.
As of the end of 1993, I worked as a NGO volunteer in Cape Verde. After more than two years of experience in the field, I took over once again the direction of Solidarité Socialiste for the period 1996-2003.

**HOW DO YOU SEE THE FUTURE OF SOLIDAR?**

As a source of pleasure because of the great success and the huge potential for activities and lobbying. There was a time when it seemed to be a little bit out of balance and also has some problems with the EU, but right now with both International Solidarity work and all the work on European matters of social affairs and economy in which members do participate more and more, it works. Furthermore SOLIDAR has acted on the fall of the Iron curtain and the Enlargement process as a whole. So, it’s really an extraordinary balance.

Secondly, greater recognition and strength since IWA (becoming SOLIDAR) was structured by differing organisations that nevertheless share common goals. A new challenge was the opening of SOLIDAR towards the political and the trade unions arena. This process started with the union side because ICFTU and SOLIDAR did start to develop joint activities. In the beginning SOLIDAR was a little bit passive and when Giampi [Giampiero Alhadeff] had taken over it transitioned into the operational phase. We were not yet recognised by politics as one is only taken into consideration from the moment an organisation actually is able to influence political decisions. We gained this ability as soon as our projects had a certain visibility and an appeal. New ties with the European Parliament, and the credibility SOLIDAR achieved with them, became positive factors for SOLIDAR in order to be recognised in the same way Caritas, Eurostep and APRODEV are.

SOLIDAR succeeded to make itself known as an established partner and this has opened up doors and made possible to achieve the standing it does have today.
SOLIDAR Member Organisations in 2008

Member Organisations

- ACPP, Asamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz, Spain
  joined 2007
- ASBÖ, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Germany
  joined 1964
- ASB, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund, Austria
  joined 1967, left 1995, rejoined 2005
- AWO, Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e.V., Germany
  joined 1948
- Baltic Platform
  joined 2007
  COMPRISING:
  - JMC, Johannes Mihkelson Centre, Estonia
    Riga Education & Science Workers Trade Union, Latvia
  - LLES, Lithuanian Labour Education Society
- CSV, Community Service Volunteers, UK
  joined 2004
- FCD Solidarité Socialiste, Belgium*
  joined 1948
- FOS, Fonds voor Ontwikkelingssalmenwerking, Belgium*
  joined 1948
- Fédération Européenne de l’Education et la Culture, France
  joined 2004
- Federation Nationale Leo Lagrange, France
  joined 2007
- FIC, Fagligt Internationalt Center, Denmark
  joined 2006
- Humanitas, The Netherlands
  joined 2000
- IFWEA, International Federation of Workers’ Education Association,
  South Africa
  joined 1998
- ISCOD, Instituto Sindical de Cooperacion al Desarrollo, Spain
  joined 2000
- ISCOS, Istituto Sindacale di Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, Italy
  joined 2004
- ISF, International Solidarity Foundation, Finland
  joined 1989
- JPA, Jeunesse au plein air, France
  joined 2005
- La Ligue de l’Enseignement, France
  joined 1997
- LegaCoopBund, Lega Provinciale Cooperative Bolzano, Italy
  joined 1999
- MPDL, Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad, Spain
  joined 2001
- NPA, Norwegian People’s Aid
  joined 1958
- Olof Palme International Center, Sweden
  joined 2000
- Progetto Sviluppo, Italy
  joined 2003
- Progetto Sud, Italy
  joined 2005
- SAH, Swiss Labour Assistance, Switzerland
  joined 1951

*Joined as Entraide Socialiste Belge
Affiliated Member Organisations

- Solidaridad Internacional, Spain joined 1989
- Solidarité Laïque, France joined 2005
- TSL Workers’Educational Association, Finland joined 2001
- UNALG, Union Nationale des Associations Laïques Gestionnaires, France joined 2005
- UNISON, UK joined 2003
- Volkshilfe Österreich Bundesverband, Austria joined 1951
- War On Want, UK joined 1980

- Ado Sah Rom, Romania affiliated 2008
- APHEDA Union Aid Abroad, Australia affiliated 2004
- ASAS, Associacao de Servicio de Apoio Social, Portugal joined 1980
- Banana Link, UK affiliated 2004
- COGIS, Italy affiliated 2004
- DGB Bildungswerk, Germany affiliated 2008
- Forum Solidarni Dla Postepu, Poland affiliated 2008
- IED Instituto de Estudios para o Desenvolvimento, Portugal affiliated 1995
- ISS, Germany affiliated 2004
- Narodna Dopomoha, Ukraine affiliated 1966
- One World Action, UK joined 1990, affiliated 2007
- OGB Solidarité Syndicale, Luxembourg affiliated 1983
- Pour La Solidarité, Belgium affiliated 2006
- Rada Pro Mezinarodni Vztahy, Czech Republic affiliated 2008
- SOS Malta, Malta affiliated 2008
SOLIDAR Presidents and Board Members since 1995

**Presidents:**
- Yañez-Barneuvo, Angelez; Solidaridad Internacional (acting 2003 - 2004)
- Schori, Pierre; (2004 - 2007)
- Weidenholzer, Josef; Volkshilfe (2007 - present)

**Vice Presidents:**
- Yañez-Barneuvo, Angelez; Solidaridad Internacional (1996 - present)
- Weidenholzer, Josef; Volkshilfe (2004 - 2007)
- Bickerstaffe, Rodney; War on Want (2004 - present)

**Board Members:**
- Amaro, Andrea; Progetto Sviluppo (1998)
- Bassoli, Sergio; Instituto Sindicale per la Cooperazione Internazionale (2000 - 2003)
- Bengoa, Juana; Solidaridad Internacional (1998 - 2002)
- Bertholomé, Marc; FDC (1996 - 1998)
- Bonmati, Manuel; ISCOD (1998 - 1999)
- Brückers, Rainer; AWO (1998 - 2005)
- Daellenbach, Ruth; SAH (2006-present)
- De Domingo, Jose Jaime; MPDL (2001 - 2003)
- De Waal, Lodewijk; Humanitas (2006 - present)
- Dondelinger, Willy; Solidarité Internationaliste (1996 - 1997)
- Ernsting, Marius; Humanitas (2000 - 2006)
- Fankhauser, Angeline; SAH (1996 - 1998)
- Fenninger, Erich; Volkshilfe (2005 - present)
- Fierens, Arnout; FOS (1998 - 2000)
- Fischbach, Raymond; OGB Solidarité Syndicale (2000 - 2003)
- Flanagan, Tamara; CSV (2008 - present)
- Forte, Renato; Associazione per la Partecipazione allo Sviluppo (1996 - 1998)
- Fret, Bert; FOS (1996 - 1998)
- Frick, Rudi; AWO (2006 - present)
- Gallin, Dan; IFWEA (2002 - 2003)
Gay, Mario; COCIS (2000 - 2003)
Hanssen, Halle Joem; NPA (1996 - 2001)
Herlitz, Esther; Na’amat (1996)
Italia, Gianni; ISOS-CISL (1998)
Iztueta, Jose-Maria; Solidaridad Internacional (2003 - present)
Jamtin, Carin; Olof Palme (2000 - 2003)
Koring, Lothar; AWO (1996 - 1998)
Lenz von Traitteur, Carola; AWO (1998 - 2006)
Luoto, Jari; ISF (1996 - 1998)
Lynch, Margaret; WoW (1996 - 1999)
Magni, Roberto; ISOS (1998)
Matheson, Catherine; WoW (2000 - 2001)
Mehlum, Jan; IFWEA (2000 - 2002)
Niedermann, Thomas; SAH (1998 - 2001)
Nikolaisen, Laila; NPA (2008 - present)
Nunez, Maite; ISCOD (2000 - 2003)
Palshoj, Peter; AIF (1998)
Persson Kristiansson, Ingrid; Olof Palme International Centre (2003 - 2006)
Richards, Louise; WoW (2003 - 2005)
Roehne, Nils Amund; NPA (2003 - 2005)
Roehrig, Heribert; ASB (2006 - present)
Roirant, Jean Marc; La Ligue de l’enseignement (2003 - present)
Royal, Angela; WoW (2001 - 2003)
Salinari, Raffaele; COCIS (1998)
Salgado Zenha, Marie Irene; ASAS (1996 - 2003)
Schmid, Andrea; Nord-Süd Institut (1997 - 2000)
Schmidt, Wilhelm; AWO (2007)
Sper, Wolfgang; Volkshilfe (1998)
Steimen, Brigitte; SAH (2001 - 2003)
Stieb, Heinz; Volkshilfe (2004 - 2006)
Torresv, Liv; NPA (2006 - 2007)
Vasconcellos, Graça; Instituto de Estudos para o Desenvolvimento (1996 - 2000)
Weidenholzer, Josef; Volkshilfe (1996 - 2004)
Wiedijk, Siebrand; Evert Vermeer Stichting (1996 - 1997)
SOLIDAR STRUCTURE IN 2008

Members

Full member = 1 vote

Annual General Assembly

Board
(as of 2009, President and Vice-Presidents incorporated)

Voted for 3 year mandate

Secretary General

Committees
Working Groups
Conferences

Secretariat
SOLIDAR SECRETARIAT IN BRUSSELS

CONNY REUTER
Secretary General

ABIGAIL GOUNDRY
Communications

ANDREA MAKSIMOVIC
International Coordinator

THERESA MOLONEY
Intern International

BARBARA CARACCIOLI
DWDL JJJ

HANNA SJÖLUND
Intern Decent Work

NN
Cooperation in the field

NATHALIE DUVEILLER
Intern Event Management

MAURICE CLAASSENS
Chargé de mission

NATALIA DANAILOV
Officer Manager

MATHIAS MAUCHER
Social Policy Coordinator

DAVID ANDRÉS
Intern Social

NN
Migration/Education

ABIGAIL GOUNDRY
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Special thanks to:

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Audrey Frith, La Ligue de l’Enseignement

Barbara Grüner, SAH

Brigitta Frucht, ASB Deutschland

Carola Lens von Traitteur, AWO

FES library

George A. Papandreou, President of Socialist International

Guy Ryder, General Secretary of International Trade Union Confederation

IISG - Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam

Juan Somavia, Director-General of International Labour Organization

Katharina Luger

Laila Nikolaisen, NPA

Ralph Coeckelberghs, former Secretary General of Solidarité Socialiste FCD

And all the SOLIDAR members for making this happen